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February 18, 2025

Senate Judiciary Committee

Subject: Support for SB 179

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee-

I'm pleased to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 179, which will provide lasting recreational immunity protections to keep Oregon's trails open. My organization, Tualatin Riverkeepers, is deeply engaged with the paddling community on the Tualatin River in Washington County. We engage nearly 2,500 paddlers each season through paddlecraft rentals and guided trips, often in conjunction with partners such as the Cities of Hillsboro, Tigard, and Tualatin. The Tualatin River received National Water Trail designation in 2021, and this bill is critical to our ability to continue to offer recreational opportunities along this increasingly busy water trail.

We appreciate that the bill, as written, removes the sunset from the current law and that's a huge step. We also ask that the committee consider amendments that would add even more protections:

- Extend the increased level of immunity in Section 1 of the bill to private landowners who open their land to the public free of charge. We have a few river-facing property owners who wish to open access to the river trail, but remain hesitant due to potential lack of protections.
- Please consider clarifying that trails that serve both recreation and transportation purposes are covered under the law.
- Include broader language such as "conveyance", rather than specific trail activities that are currently spelled out in the "includes but is not limited to" activities list. We're particularly sensitive to this point given that we recreate on a water trail using paddles.

The interest in boating has exploded over the past decade, and we've been able to engage many residents and visitors in the water trail. Lasting recreational immunity protections are critical to our work and to that of our partners as they develop additional amenities to support recreation on our water trail and contiguous recreation facilities and trails.

Best Regards,

Glenn Fee
Executive Director